DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 360 CS 510 387

AUTHOR Schultz, Tanjev
TITLE Does Graduate Work Matter? Characteristics of Journalists Who Went to Grad School.
PUB DATE 2000-08-00
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (83rd, Phoenix, AZ, August 9-12, 2000).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Attitudes; Comparative Analysis; *Graduate Study; Higher Education; Job Skills; *Journalism; *Journalism Education; Journalism Research
IDENTIFIERS *Journalists; Secondary Analysis

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a secondary analysis of two large surveys of United States news journalists and newspaper journalists which compares characteristics of graduate-school-trained journalists to those with only a college education. The paper states that the analysis also considers differences between studies in and outside the communication field. It also states that besides demographics and job characteristics, assumed differences in perceived influences of education, in journalistic role concepts and audience perceptions were tested. Overall, the analysis revealed few differences, but journalists with graduate education were found to be more likely than college educated journalists to work for larger news organizations, and to support an interpretive role. Contains 2 tables of data, 17 notes, and 16 references. (Author/NKA)

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ED 445 360

Paper presented to the annual AEJMC Convention

GEIG Division

Aug. 9-12, 2000

Phoenix, AZ.

Does Graduate Work Matter?

Characteristics of Journalists Who Went to Grad School

Tanjev Schultz, M.A.

Doctoral student

Mailing address:

Tanjev Schultz

University of Bremen

FB 8: InIIS

Linzer Straße 4

28359 Bremen

Germany

tanjev@uni-bremen.de

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Does Graduate Work Matter?
Characteristics of Journalists Who Went to Grad School

This paper reports a secondary analysis which compares characteristics of graduate school-trained journalists to those with only college-education. It also considers differences between studies in and outside the communication field. Besides demographics and job characteristics, assumed differences in perceived influences of education, in journalistic role concepts and audience perceptions were tested. Overall, the analysis revealed few differences. But journalists with graduate education were found to be more likely than college-educated journalists to work for larger news organizations, and to support an interpretative role.

In the United States, journalism and mass communication is an established, but still growing academic field (Becker & Kosicki 1998). Many would agree that Joseph Pulitzer's prophecy has come true: "Before the century closes schools of journalism will be generally accepted as a feature of specialized higher education, like schools of law or of medicine" (Pulitzer 1904, 642).[1] Of course, discussions about academic training in journalism continue.[2] But it is an indisputable fact that the overall education level of journalists has increased over the last decades, and that college training in journalism has become the most common career start for journalists.[3]

Pulitzer was hoping that such a development would contribute to high quality journalism. But it is not entirely clear what a higher, formal education level really means to the practice of journalism.[4] This study does not look at the actual work of journalists, but it tries to uncover differences in attitudes and perceptions. Undertaking a secondary analysis of two representative surveys of U.S. journalists, it focuses on journalists who went to graduate school. Past research has already explored characteristics of journalists with an undergraduate background in journalism. In general, differences with other journalists were not very notable. This paper now examines journalists with graduate education, analyzing their demographics, job characteristics, role concepts and perceptions of audiences and education influences.[5]

A relatively small percentage of U.S. students continue education in graduate schools. Many of them start an academic career, but still a considerable number go into professional journalism. In 1992, about 11% of all news journalists held a graduate degree, and about 7% held a graduate degree in journalism/communication (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 39/236).[6] In 1996, about 18% of newspaper journalists held a graduate degree, and about 10% in journalism/communication (Voakes 1997).

Although since 1995 the total number of students enrolled at the master's level in the communication field has declined a little bit, there has been a long-term growth in graduate education. Accordingly, the number of master's programs in the communication field has increased from 167 in 1995 to 174 in 1996, plus a stable number of 35 doctoral programs (Becker & Kosicki 1997).

Literature Review

A higher education level may correlate with certain attitudes of journalists, regardless of the field of study. But there is also an expectation that studies in the *communication* field make a difference. If both assumptions were true, at least to some extent, graduate studies in the communication field should be a very formative type of education for journalists.

It is hard, though, to establish a direct link between journalists' education and mass media content, as proposed by the hypothesis: "Media workers who have a 'communication' college degree produce content with different characteristics than do those with other majors" (Shoemaker & Reese 1996, 264). Instead, it is easier to explore demographic and attitudinal characteristics. This implies that journalists' attitudes may

have some impact on their work and on the content they produce. Much research, however, suggests that organizational and societal factors are more important influences in shaping mass media content.[7] Besides, even individual attitudes, like role perceptions and ethics, can be influenced by societies' political system (Zhu et al. 1997) or by family upbringing (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 154) rather than by academic education. Therefore one cannot expect too many and great differences due to the field and level of studies.

Comparing journalists who were undergraduate majors in journalism with those who were not, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996, 41) found differences mainly in job profiles: While all types and sizes of media organizations tend to hire college graduates now, daily newspaper journalists are most likely to hold a college degree in journalism. News magazines seem to be least likely to employ college graduates who majored in journalism.[8]

But when it comes to job satisfaction or role perceptions, no significant differences were found. A degree in the communication field did not predict membership of a professional group (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 130). Nor was majoring in journalism as an undergraduate correlated with role perceptions. Mainly political orientation seems to predict whether journalists endorse a "disseminator" role (more conservative) or an "interpretative" or "adversarial" role (more liberal).

Weaver and Wilhoit took their overall findings as an indicator that growing academic education in journalism has not led to a homogeneous conception of journalistic practice. At the same time, they criticized journalism schools for obviously not inspiring

their graduates "to participate in building a stronger institutional foundation for the field" (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 170).

Educators may find it troubling that journalists' academic training leaves so few obvious marks. They may take some comfort in the fact that nearly half the respondents in the Weaver and Wilhoit study mentioned journalism school teachers as influential for their ethical views, yet newsroom learning is perceived as far more important. Besides, the more years of schooling journalists had, the more likely they were to tolerate controversial journalistic tactics (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 154/168).

But one still wonders whether journalists who went to graduate school see themselves more influenced by their education than others. After all, they should be affected by an academic socialization most clearly. One could also expect graduate school-trained journalists to have a special role understanding. Since they should be specifically trained to analyze, interpret and question viewpoints and societal developments, it is feasible to think that they would endorse a similar role for journalism. The highest educated journalists might adopt an "interpretative" role or a self-perception as "educators" of the public (see Melin-Higgins 1996). If this were true they might be also more likely to approve concepts of "public journalism" which tries to stimulate citizens to participate in deliberation processes (Charity 1995; Merritt 1998). But it could also mean that journalists with the highest education are rather elitist, and that they have a low opinion of their audiences.

Hypotheses

First, journalists with graduate work were examined regarding their demographics (age, gender, race, politics, religion), media size, job profile and job satisfaction. No hypotheses were made here, except for an expectation that they would be more likely to work in higher positions and larger media organizations.

Finally, eight hypotheses were tested, the first two of which drew on journalists' perceived influence of their education:

H 1a) Journalists who hold a graduate degree in the communication field rate the influence of journalism teachers on their ideas about ethics in journalism higher than journalists who were journalism majors in college and did not go to graduate school.[9]

H 1b) Journalists who hold a graduate degree in the communication field rate the influence of their journalistic training on their concept of newsworthiness higher than journalists who were journalism majors in college and did not go to graduate school.

The remaining hypotheses addressed journalistic role concepts and audience perceptions:

H 2a) Journalists with graduate education are more likely to seek an impact on society than those with undergraduate education only.

H 2b) Specifically, journalists with graduate education in the communication field are more likely to seek an impact on society than those with an undergraduate education in the communication field (no graduate education).

H 3a) Journalists with graduate education are more likely to endorse an interpretative and educating role of journalism than those with undergraduate education only.

H 3b) Specifically, journalists with graduate education in the communication field are more likely to endorse an interpretative and educating role of journalism than those with an undergraduate education in the communication field (no graduate education).

H 4a) Journalists with graduate education are more likely to approve concepts of public journalism than those with undergraduate education only.

H 4b) Specifically, journalists with graduate education in the communication field are more likely to approve concepts of public journalism than those with an undergraduate education in the communication field (no graduate education).

H 5a) Journalists with graduate education are more likely to have a low opinion of their audiences than those with undergraduate education only.

H 5b) Specifically, journalists with graduate education in the communication field are more likely to have a low opinion of their audiences than those with an undergraduate education in the communication field (no graduate education).

Method

This study is based on a secondary analysis of two large surveys of U.S. news journalists and newspaper journalists, respectively. The first survey was carried out by Weaver and Wilhoit in 1992, as a replication of a study they did in 1982. It adopted a multistage sampling procedure, first randomly selecting 574 news organizations from media industry directories. Finally, individual journalists were drawn according to a systematic interval from a compiled list from the selected organizations. By telephone, 1,156 journalists were successfully interviewed. The response rate was 81.3%, the

sampling error margin at the 95% level of confidence plus or minus three percentage points.

The second survey was carried out by Paul Voakes and the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1996. It also adopted a multistage sampling procedure, first selecting 61 daily newspapers of all sizes from a list of 1,487 U.S. papers. Individual journalists were systematically drawn from an alphabetized roster of each paper's employees. Questionnaires were sent to 1,191 journalists; 1,037 were returned, representing a response rate of 87.1%. The sampling error margin at the 95% level of confidence was plus or minus three percentage points.

Both surveys included questions about the journalists' education background, which were recoded to reflect the independent variables in this study. As a result, one variable measured journalists who went to grad school versus journalists who went to college (but not to grad school). The other independent variable had the values: journalists who studied journalism/communication in graduate school versus journalists who majored in journalism/communication in college (and did not go to grad school).

When using data from the Weaver and Wilhoit survey, journalists who had "some college" were included together with those who held a college degree. Similarly, those with "some" graduate education were included together with those who held a graduate degree. In Voakes' survey such distinctions were not made in the original questionnaire.

The independent variables were first tested with crosstabulations and t-tests to check demographics, media size, job profiles, and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured straightforwardly in the Weaver and Wilhoit survey. From Voakes' study,

three more indirect indicators were used. Journalists had been asked whether their present job met their expectations. They were also asked how they would feel if they were still doing the same kind of work five years later. Finally, a general question asked whether the journalist would choose newspapering as a career, if he/she had to do it over again.

Journalists' perceived influence of their education, as hypothesized in H 1, was examined with the Weaver and Wilhoit data. They had measured the perceived influence of different sources on journalists' ideas in matters of ethics and on their concept of what is newsworthy.[10] Two questions from their survey were used to test the second hypothesis. Journalists had been asked how important they found the chance to influence public affairs.[11] The other question asked how strong the journalist thought the influence of the media should be on public opinion.[12]

The third hypothesis was tested by a set of questions in both surveys addressing role concepts. Journalists were asked to rank how important a number of things in journalism are, among them the items "get information to the public quickly; provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems; provide entertainment and relaxation", and "investigate claims and statements made by the government." These were found in both surveys. Moreover, other items only included in the Weaver and Wilhoit study were also considered: "develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public; be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions; be an adversary of businesses by being constantly skeptical of their actions; set the political agenda; influence public opinion; give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs."

A set of four questions from Voakes' study was used to test the fourth hypothesis about public journalism. Journalists were asked about different tools used in public journalism.[13] Finally, the fifth hypothesis was tested using a question from the Weaver and Wilhoit survey. They had asked journalists to place their agreement on a Likert scale to the statement "(Readers, viewers, listeners) are gullible and easily fooled."

Findings

Regarding demographics, journalists with graduate education were in some respects different from college-trained journalists.

Gender

When comparing all college- with all graduate school-educated journalists, the 1992 data revealed no gender differences. In each group about one third was female. But when comparing journalists who studied journalism/communication in grad school with those who majored as undergraduates in journalism, the latter were more likely to be female ($p = .015$; Cramer's $V = .12$). In the college-group 39% were female versus 25.7% in the group of journalists who went to communication grad schools. An explanation might be that they were not striving as much for professional journalism careers. In contrast, the 1996 data showed higher percentages of females in the graduate-education groups than in the college-education groups. But these differences were not statistically significant.

Race

The 1992 data revealed no differences in race. About 90% in all groups were white. According to the 1996 data, daily newspaper journalists who were trained in

communication grad schools were more likely to be Afro-American (14%) than journalists who were journalism majors in college and did not go to graduate school (only 5%). Differences were statistically significant at the .05 level. This finding might reflect efforts of communication schools to achieve diversity in their graduate programs, a need for Afro-American journalists to be higher educated in order to get hired, more motivation among Afro-Americans for graduate degrees, or a combination of these factors.

Age

In the 1992 survey, the communication grad school-group was older, with a mean of 40 years, than the journalism college group with a mean of 35 years ($p < .000$). This was also true when comparing all journalists with graduate education (mean: 41 years), with all college-educated journalists (mean: 37 years), $p < .000$. The same tendency showed up in the 1996 survey.[14]

Religion

The 1992 data showed a significant relationship regarding religion ($p=.016$).[15] Due to similarities in the percentages of Protestants, it was only weak overall (Cramer's V = .10). But journalists who went to grad school were less likely to be Catholic (26.7% versus 31.2% in the college group), and notably more likely to be Jewish (10.4% versus 4.5%). The same tendency, even a bit stronger, was found when comparing journalists with graduate education in journalism/communication (14% Jewish), to journalists who majored as undergraduates in journalism (3% Jewish). The 1996 data showed the same statistically significant patterns.

Political ideology

According to the 1992 data, journalists with graduate education consider themselves politically more to the left than journalists with college education. Among the latter 50% claimed to be "pretty far or a little to the left", compared to 59% of journalists with graduate education. However, the relationship was quite weak ($p=.01$; Kendall's tau-c = -.083), and it was not possible to detect a significant relationship regarding party affiliation. Nor were there any significant differences when examining journalism majors (no grad school) versus communication graduate students. – The 1996 survey indicated clearer differences. Graduate school-trained daily newspaper journalists were more likely to think of themselves as Democrats/liberals (47%) than those who went only to college (35%), $p<.05$.

Summed up, demographic differences were most clearly and consistently found with regard to age. Journalists with graduate education are, on average, slightly older than college-trained journalists. They are also more likely to be Jewish, less likely to be Catholic, and overall slightly more liberal.

Size of news organization

In the 1992 survey, graduate education could not predict whether a journalist worked for a publicly traded media organisation. But it was a factor in predicting size of the news organisation: Journalists who went to graduate school were more likely to work for media with higher numbers of full-time news and editorial employees. The mean for journalists with graduate education was 92.6 employees, for college-trained journalists only 68.6 ($p< .000$). Journalists who majored as undergraduates in journalism worked for relatively large organisations. In addition, journalists with graduate education were

most likely to work for large media organisations. Their mean of editorial employees achieved 101.5, compared to 81.3 for journalism college majors who did not go to grad school ($p = .028$). Circulation figures in the 1996 survey confirmed the overall trend that graduate school-trained journalists work for larger news organisations than college-trained journalists.

Job profiles and job satisfaction

In the 1992 survey, journalists educated in graduate school enjoyed higher salaries than college-educated journalists.[16] But this difference could be attributed to organisation size and age. Journalists with graduate education were not significantly more likely to occupy higher job positions (as supervisors or in the higher management), neither in the 1992 nor in the 1996 survey. They were not significantly more likely to cover a specific beat, either. Moreover, the data revealed no significant differences in job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was not supported. Journalists who went to communication graduate schools did not rank the influence of journalism teachers or their journalistic training significantly higher than journalists who were trained as journalism majors in college. In both groups about 35% to 40% claimed that journalism teachers and their journalistic training, respectively, was extremely influential for their views on journalistic ethics (H 1a) and their concepts of newsworthiness (H 1b). Despite the lack of differences between the two levels of academic journalism education, it should be noted that the percentages indicate that journalists rate the influence of their education rather high.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis could not be supported, either. Roughly the same percentage of journalists with graduate as with college education found the chance to influence public opinion very important (about 40%). The same was true when specifically looking at the two groups of journalists with academic training in journalism/communication (H 2b). When considering journalists' rankings on a scale between zero and ten measuring how strong the influence of the media should be on public opinion, differences in the means were statistically significant but practically negligible. On average, journalists with college education scored 5.6, and those who majored in journalism scored 5.8. Journalists with graduate education scored 6.1, those who studied journalism/communication in grad school scored 6.3.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis was partly supported. While the different education groups were in general very close in their role concepts, there were still some notable differences. Regarding H 3a, journalists with graduate education were indeed more likely to find it extremely important to "analyze and interpret complex problems". In the Weaver and Wilhoit survey, there was an almost 12 percentage point difference between the two compared groups (see Table 1).

Table 1: Interpretive Role (1992 data Weaver/Wilhoit, news journalists)

			Analyze, interpret complex problems				
			not really important at all	somewhat important	quite important	extremely important	Total
Journalists with graduate v. college education	college	Count	12	157	305	419	893
		% within Graduate work v. college	1.3%	17.6%	34.2%	46.9%	100.0%
	grad school	Count	2	21	60	118	201
		% within Graduate work v. college	1.0%	10.4%	29.9%	58.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	14	178	365	537	1094
		% within Graduate work v. college	1.3%	16.3%	33.4%	49.1%	100.0%

Chi square = 10.84 p = .013
gamma = .22 Kendall's tau-c = .08

In the 1996 data of daily newspaper journalists the difference was with 16 percentage points even higher (see Table 2).

Table 2: Interpretive Role (1996 data, ASNE/Voakes - newspaper journalists)

			Analyze, interpret complex problems				
			extremely important	very Important	somewhat important	not very important	Total
Journalists with graduate v. college education	college	Count	338	228	129	27	722
		% within Graduate work v. college	46.8%	31.6%	17.9%	3.7%	100.0%
	grad school	Count	113	41	23	3	180
		% within Graduate work v. college	62.8%	22.8%	12.8%	1.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	451	269	152	30	902
		% within Graduate work v. college	50.0%	29.8%	16.9%	3.3%	100.0%

Chi square = 15.16 p = .002
gamma = - 27 Kendall's tau-c = - .10

When controlling for political ideology, Democrats/liberals were more likely to find analysing and interpreting complex problems extremely important. Still,

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Democrats/liberals with graduate education were significantly more likely to think so than Democrats/liberals with college education. Republicans/conservatives showed no significant differences by education level.

Consistently with above average support for the "interpretative function" (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 138), journalists with graduate education were also more likely than college-educated journalists to find it extremely important to "discuss national policy while it is still being developed" (51% versus 37%; p= .001).

Questions testing an adversary role understanding revealed no significant differences. Nor were journalists with graduate education more likely to think that it is extremely important to "develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public." So it seems as if they are not more likely to adopt an "educator" role. And they were even less likely to find it extremely important to "give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs" (50% in college group vs. 39% in grad group; p=.028). This finding might be taken as an indicator of a more elitist attitude of journalists with graduate education.

The same patterns of role perceptions were found when specifically comparing journalists who were journalism majors in college with those who were trained in communication graduate schools (H 3b).

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was not supported. Neither did daily newspaper journalists with graduate education approve concepts of public journalism significantly more (or less)

than college educated journalists (H 4a). Nor was there a significant difference when specifically considering education levels in the communication field (H 4b).

Hypothesis 5

Curiously, journalists with graduate education are not at all more likely to have a low opinion of their audiences. This hypothesis was not supported. On the contrary, among college educated journalists 55% "strongly disagreed" with the statement that their audience is gullible and easily fooled. But among journalists with graduate education, 65% strongly disagreed. Journalists with academic training in the communication field are generally more opposed to the statement. When looking only at journalists who had been journalism majors in college (and did not go to grad schools), 57% strongly disagreed with the statement. Among journalists who studied at communication graduate schools, 69% strongly disagreed.[17]

Conclusions

Overall, the analysis revealed few differences between journalists who were trained in graduate schools and those who only went to college. But the first were found clearly more likely to be older, to work for larger news organisations, and to support an interpretative role for journalists. But this does not necessarily mean that graduate education is really shaping journalists' role perceptions. Possibly graduate students are, by a process of self-selection, more likely to emphasize the importance of interpreting and analyzing complex problems to begin with.

As the media landscape becomes ever more confusing, and the Internet provides an overwhelming glut of unfiltered, first-hand information, traditional news media might have to increase efforts in interpreting and ordering things, bringing about meaning, and stimulating rational discourse. Journalists with graduate education might be better prepared than college-educated journalists to meet this challenge, especially as they seem to be not thinking little of their audiences.

Interestingly, the level of education seems generally more influential than the field of studies. On the other hand, both former undergraduate majors in journalism and journalists with graduate education in the communication field rate the influence of journalism teachers and their journalistic training relatively high. While job socialisation, organisational routines and constraints can certainly override educational influences, more concrete effects of education might be revealed by qualitative studies. Furthermore, more attempts to link individual characteristics of journalists to the mass media content they produce should be made.

In the meantime one is tempted to consider again what Joseph Pulitzer has written almost 100 years ago. Despite his enthusiastic efforts for an academic training of journalists, he also made a simple point that, I think, becomes even more important when the level of formal education increases: "A fool trailing an alphabet of degrees after his name is still a fool, and a genius, if necessary, will make his own college" (Pulitzer 1904, 643).

[1] For a short historical overview of academic journalism education see Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986, 1991, 41-44.

[2] See for example a *Rolling Stone* article that saw j-schools in a deep crisis (Ledbetter 1997).

[3] In 1971, 58% of U.S. journalists were holding a college degree, and 34% majored in journalism. Eleven years later, almost 75% held a college degree, and 40% majored in journalism. In 1992, 82% had a college degree; again 40% majored in journalism. Including radio, TV, telecommunications, and communications, the increase of college graduate journalists who majored in the communication field is from 41% to 56% during the 1971-1992 period (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 29). Survey data from 1996 indicate that 89% of daily newspaper journalists hold a college degree, 54% in the communication field (Voakes 1997).

[4] It is at least remarkable that the trend to higher education in journalism is accompanied by laments over journalism's sensationalism and trivialization.

[5] In general, there is little research done on graduate education in the communication field (Ryan 1980), let alone on journalists with graduate education.

[6] Also, since 1982, the proportion of communication studies among journalists with a graduate education has increased nearly 10 points. Thirty-seven percent of journalists who hold a graduate degree in the communication field earned their undergraduate degree in the same subject, followed by English, history and political science (Weaver & Wilhoit 1996, 46).

[7] For an overview see Shoemaker & Reese 1996; Berkowitz, 1997.

[8] News magazines are most likely to hire from graduate schools, especially students from Ivy League schools that traditionally have no explicit journalism programs.

[9] It would be interesting to specifically test journalists who have an undergraduate plus a graduate degree, both in the communication field, compared with journalists who hold only an undergraduate degree in the communication field or in another field, respectively. However, the N's are getting too small to do such an analysis properly. In the large data set of the Weaver and Wilhoit study, for example, only 29 journalists majored in journalism and eventually studied journalism or a communication subject in graduate school.

[10] The exact questions were: "How influential have journalism teachers been in developing your ideas about what's right and wrong in journalism. Would you say extremely influential, quite influential, somewhat influential, or not very influential in developing your ideas about what's right and wrong in journalism?"
"Currently, in your day-to-day job, how influential is each of the following on your concept of what is newsworthy. Please use a scale from one to five, where one means not at all influential and five means very influential. Your journalistic training?"

[11] The exact question was: "I'd like to find out how important a number of things are to you in judging jobs in your field – not just your job. For instance, how much difference does the chance to influence public affairs make in how you rate a job in your field – is it very important, fairly important, or not too important?"

[12] The exact question was: "How strong do you think the influence of the media *should* be on public opinion? Please choose a number from zero to ten, where zero means no influence and ten means very great influence."

[13] The exact questions were: "A newspaper reports on alternative solutions to community problems, pointing out trade-offs that may be involved."

"A newspaper conducts town meetings to discover key issues in the community and follows up with stories focusing on these issues and some possible solutions."
"A newspaper polls the public to determine the most pressing community issues, then tries to get the candidates to focus on these issues."
"A newspaper develops enterprise stories, supported with editorials, to focus public attention on a community problem and tries to help the community move toward a solution."
Response categories were "strongly approve, approve somewhat, disapprove somewhat, strongly disapprove".

[14] In that study age was measured by categories. Crosstabulations showed significant differences with an overrepresentation of 41-50 year-old journalists in the grad school groups.

[18] No significant differences were found in how journalists ranked the *importance* of religious beliefs. Roughly, a bit more than one third of journalists found religion or religious beliefs very important, a bit more than ten percent found them not at all important, regardless of having graduate or college education.

[16] In the 1996 study, income was not measured. – In 1992, the differences were significant at $p < .000$ for graduate education v. college education (Kendall's tau c = .12), as well as for grad communication v. journalism major in college (Kendall's tau c = .16). Income had been divided into three groups: less than $ 35,000 / between $ 35,000 and $ 60,000 / more than $ 60,000.

[17] Due to relatively close percentages on the other four items of the Likert scale, the overall differences were not statistically significant when applying a Chi square test. However, when treating the Likert scale as an interval measure, and calculating means and a t-test, differences were statistically significant ($p = .006$) for a mean difference of .21 between journalists with college versus graduate education.
In general, this survey question might involve skewing effects of social desirability.

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